

What is claimed is:

1. A programmable video receiver device comprising a computer readable medium storing programming code for controlling the device to perform processing comprising:

storing program metadata that includes timing and descriptive data for television programs and segment metadata that includes timing and descriptive data for individual segments of television programs;

receiving a command to display a program banner; and

in response to the command, producing a program banner that is customized to the currently displayed segment of the currently displayed television program, the program banner comprising at least one of descriptive information and timing information from the segment metadata for the currently displayed segment.

2. The device claimed in claim 1, wherein the program banner further comprises fields representing individual segments of the currently displayed program in accordance with said segment metadata.

3. The device claimed in claim 2, wherein the sizes of the segment fields are proportioned according to start times of the respective segments.

4. The device claimed in claim 3, wherein the segment fields contain descriptive information and timing information for corresponding segments.

5. The device claimed in claim 3, wherein the program banner further comprises an indicator that is navigable among said segment fields in response to navigation commands to indicate a particular segment of the program.

6. The device claimed in claim 5, wherein location of the indicator on a segment field causes display in the program banner of at least one of descriptive information and timing information concerning the segment indicated by the indicator.

7. The device claimed in claim 5, wherein said processing further comprises:

in response to a command, scheduling a reminder for a segment indicated by the indicator; and
providing the reminder in accordance with a reminder schedule.

8. The device claimed in claim 5, wherein said processing further comprises:

in response to a command, scheduling the recording of a segment indicated by the indicator; and
recording the segment in accordance with a recording schedule.

9. The device claimed in claim 5, wherein said processing further comprises:

in response to a command, initiating recording of a segment indicated by the indicator.

10. The device claimed in claim 5, wherein said processing further comprises:

in response to a command, updating viewer preferences stored by the device in accordance with segment characteristics represented in the segment metadata of a segment indicated by the indicator.

11. The device claimed in claim 5, wherein said processing further comprises:

in response to a command, presenting a user interface that displays segment characteristics represented in the segment metadata of a segment indicated by the indicator;

receiving user selections with respect to the displayed segment characteristics; and

updating viewer preferences in accordance with the user selections.

12. The device claimed in claim 5, wherein said processing further comprises:

in response to a command, identifying and displaying to the user additional segments and programs having characteristics in common with characteristics represented in the segment metadata of a segment indicated by the indicator.

13. The device claimed in claim 5, wherein said processing further comprises:

in response to a command, presenting a user interface that displays segment characteristics represented in the segment metadata of a segment indicated by the indicator;

receiving user selections with respect to the displayed segment characteristics; and

identifying and displaying to the user additional segments and programs having characteristics in common with the selected segment characteristics.

14. The device claimed in claim 5, wherein the program banner further comprises interest level information indicating a level of viewer interest in a segment indicated by the indicator.

15. The device claimed in claim 14, wherein the interest level information includes a color code representing the level of viewer interest.

16. The device claimed in claim 14, wherein the interest level information includes at least one of a category and a keyword used in determining the level of interest.

17. The device claimed in claim 2, wherein the program banner further comprises interest level information indicating respective levels of viewer interest in respective segments of the program.

18. The device claimed in claim 17, wherein the interest level information includes a color code representing the level of viewer interest.

19. The device claimed in claim 17, wherein the interest level information includes at least one of a category and a keyword used in determining the level of interest.

20. A method in a video receiver device comprising:
storing program metadata that includes timing and descriptive data for television programs and segment metadata that includes timing and descriptive data for individual segments of television programs;
receiving a command to display a program banner; and
in response to the command, producing a program banner that is customized to the currently displayed segment of the currently displayed television program, the program banner comprising at least one of descriptive information and timing information from the segment metadata for the currently displayed segment.

21. The method claimed in claim 20, wherein the program banner further comprises fields representing individual segments of the currently displayed program in accordance with said segment metadata.

22. The method claimed in claim 21, wherein the program banner further comprises an indicator that is navigable among said segment fields in response to navigation commands to indicate a particular segment of the program.

23. The method claimed in claim 22, wherein location of the indicator on a segment field causes display in the program banner of at least one of descriptive information and timing information concerning the segment indicated by the indicator.

24. A method in a video receiver device comprising:
storing program metadata that includes timing and descriptive data for television programs and segment metadata that includes timing and descriptive data for individual segments of television programs;
receiving a command to display a program banner;
in response to the command, producing a program banner for the currently displayed television program from the program metadata for the currently displayed program; and
in response to a further command, displaying at least one of descriptive information and timing information from the segment metadata for a currently displayed segment of the program.

25. A method in a video receiver device comprising:
storing program metadata that includes timing and descriptive data for television programs and segment metadata that includes timing and descriptive data for individual segments of television programs;

receiving a command to display information about a currently displayed segment of a currently displayed program; and

in response to the command, displaying at least one of descriptive information and timing information from the segment metadata for the currently displayed segment of the program.